Indo-Japan Relation

4160. SHRI ANANTA SETHI : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have a proposal to improve Indo-Japan relation;

(b) if so, the efforts made in this regard; and

(c) the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) India has always attached importance to our relations with Japan. The Government has been making continuous efforts to improve Indo-Japan relations.

(b) and (c) Since January 1999, functional co-operation and official dialogue, interrupted by the adverse Japanese reaction to our nuclear tests, have resumed. The Foreign Office Consultations at Foreign Secretary/Deputy Minister level took place from January 17—21, 1999; Trade Talks (at Commerce Secretary level) were held on February 5, 1999 and MEA-MITI talks on February 22-23. Investment Promotion Talks were held in New Delhi from August 9—11, 1999 and Science and Technology Committee meeting was held in Tokyo on September 6-7, 1999.

A number of high level exchanges have also taken place between India and Japan in recent times. External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh visited Japan on November 23—26, 1999. During the visit, both sides agreed that India-Japan relations should be normalised and developed in the interests of peace and stability in Asia and the world. It was agreed that dialouge at various levels should countinue in order to enhance mutual understanding. It was also agreed to reconstitute the India-Japan Parliamentary Friendship League, to set up an Eminent Persons Group, and have a security dialogue. Both sides agreed to celebrate appropriately, in 2002, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations.

Raksha Mantri, Shri George Fernandes, visited Japan from January 10—14, 2000. During his visit, both sides agreed to commence a regular security and defence related dialogue and expand defence personnel exchanges, education and training.

Secretary of State Ichita Yamamoto visited India on October 24—26, 1999. During the talks with Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Ajit

Kumar Panja, a wide range of issues such as the nuclear issue including CTBT, the situatin in Pakistan, continuation of dialogue in various fields including defence, culture, economic cooperation and trade, Wisemen's Committee and Parliamentary Friendship Association were discussed.

This year, Foreign office Consultations were held on February 14 at the level of the Foreign Secretary of India and Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan. The 30th meeting of the India-Japan Business Cooperation Committee was held on January 31-February 1. A Friendship Exchange Committee's Economic Mission visited India (February 27—March 5) to promote understanding. The first round of India-Japan Energy talks was held on March 7. The fourth round of MEA-MITI Dialogue was held on March 28, 2000. The 10th meeting of the Mixed Cultural Commission is likely to be in May/June. Apart from this, talks at Commerce Secretary level and Security dialogue have also been planned. Former Prime Minister Hashimoto visited India on February 20—22 2,000 to deliver a keynote speech at a conference organised by Tata Energy Research Institute.

The Japanese Minister for International Trade & Industry Takashi Fukaya is scheduled to visit India on May 4-5, to hold talks with Minister for Commerce & Industry.

British Foreign Secretary's India Visit

4161. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the British Foreign Secretary has recently paid a visit to India and held discussions on many issues;

(b) if so, the details of discussions and outcome thereof;

(c) whether UK Government have agreed to provide help to India to face the problems of cross border terrorism and funding of militants and also to strengthen defence ties; and

(d) if so, the terms and conditions fixed in providing such help?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir. Mr. Robin Cook, British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, visited India from 15—18 April 2000.